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RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1681
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0109
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5156
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: THAI MINISTER DISAVOWS IRANIAN CLAIM HE SUPPORTED
IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REF: OSC REPORT IAP20070226950045

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce, reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Sittichai Pokai-udom, Minister of Information and Communications Technology, contacted the Ambassador on February 28 in response to a Tehran Fars News Agency article (reftel) that claimed he had "voiced his country's full support for the Islamic Republic's peaceful nuclear plans." (Note: The quotation represents a paraphrasing of Sittichai's alleged view. End Note.)

12. (C) Sittichai explained he had met, at the Iranian Ambassador's request, with the Iranian Ambassador and another Iranian (NFI). He claimed the press report completely misconstrued his position. He told us he had in fact told the Iranian Ambassador that the RTG suspected the Iranians were using their nuclear program for other than peaceful energy purposes, and this was not good. Sittichai said he had spoken with Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont, and the RTG would issue a rebuttal. Sittichai said he wanted to ensure that this false press report did not cause difficulties with the USG.

13. (C) Comment: We are unsure whether, as he claimed, Sittichai did in fact reprimand the Iranians for their nuclear activities. However, we do believe it possible that the Iranians took liberties in how they represented their conversation with Sittichai. Although Sittichai's portfolio does not include nuclear issues, his background is in engineering rather than politics, and it strikes us as quite possible that he might have exceeded his brief during the meeting with the Iranians.

BOYCE